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**بعثة الجمهورية العربية السورية
الدائمة لدى الأمم المتحدة - نيويورك**



Statement by

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H.E. John W. Ashe,

President of the 68th Session of the General Assembly

I would like to congratulate you and your friendly country, Antigua and Barbuda, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session, and to wish you success in conducting our work for the enhancement of the important and neutral role of the President of the General Assembly undertaken by your predecessor, who avoided engaging the Presidency of the General Assembly in political agendas.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, when I addressed this august Assembly, our world was facing many events that ravaged it and its nations. We were all hope that the scene will change for the better this year, but unfortunately, the situation remains the same, and in some parts of the world the situation became even worse. Many countries are still facing political, economic and financial crises that exceed their ability to confront them alone. While the peoples of the world are looking forward to see effective international efforts exerted to overcome those crises, we witness today indications of exacerbating and increasing problems, since hegemony and domination on the capabilities of peoples have escalated in a way that contradicts blatantly the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of International Law. Instead of settling regional and international conflicts by peaceful means, some known countries continued pursuing aggressive policies against certain nations. Political hypocrisy increased to intervene in the domestic affairs of states under the pretext of Humanitarian Intervention or the Responsibility to Protect; and when those aggressive policies did not prove beneficial for some countries, like my own country, Syria, these well-known states revealed their true face, and threatened with blatant military aggression outside the mandate Security Council, and certainly away from any international consensus. This comes as those same countries imposed immoral, illegal and unilateral coercive measures. This is in addition to suspicious policies that aim at spreading sedition and

turmoil within the fabric of multiple and harmonized national communities that lived for hundreds of years in harmony, unity and understanding.

Worst of all, some countries destructive major wars under the pretext of combating terrorism, while, at the same time, they are the ones supporting terrorism in my country, in contradiction of all United Nations' resolutions and all human and moral values. Here, again, I pose the same question I have already posed last year: was the international consensus on combating terrorism a serious commitment undertaken by the Member States of this organization, or was it just mere rhetoric?

Mr. President,

What is happening in my country has become clear to everyone. Yet, some countries do not want to recognize that Al-Qaeda, the most dangerous terrorist organization in the world, and its many offshoots, like Jabhat Al-Nusrah, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Brigade of Islam and many others, are fighting in Syria. The scenes of murder, manslaughter and eating human hearts were shown on TV screens, but did not touch blind consciences. In my country, Mr. President, there are innocent civilians whose heads are put on the grill just because they violate the extremist ideology and deviant views of Al-Qaeda. In Syria, Ladies and Gentlemen, there are murderers who dismember human bodies into pieces while still alive and send their limbs to their families, just because those citizens are defending a unified and secular Syria.

In my country, those terrorists violate, on daily basis, human rights, citizens' rights in living and livelihood and the citizens' religious beliefs and political affiliations. Any Syrian citizen who does not belong to this obscurantist and takfiri ideology is doomed to be killed, slaughtered, or the women of his family are taken as captives on the basis of perverted concepts of religion that have nothing to do with Islam.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is no civil war in Syria, but it is a war against terror that recognizes no values, nor justice, nor equality, and disregards any rights or laws. Confronting this terror in my country requires the international community to act in accordance with relevant resolutions on counter-terrorism, particularly, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and to take

necessary and prompt measures to compel those well-known countries that finance, arm, train and provide a safe haven and passage for terrorists coming from different countries of the world.

Mr. President,

The people New York have witnessed the devastations of terrorism, and were burned with the fire of extremism and bloodshed, the same way we are suffering now in Syria. How can some countries, hit by the same terrorism we are suffering now in Syria, claim to fight terrorism in all parts of the world, while supporting it in my country? The claims about the existence of moderate militants and extremist militants have become a bad joke. Terrorism means only terrorism; it cannot be classified as moderate terrorism and extremist terrorism. Therefore, I would like to ask you, what do you call those who kidnap children in order to sell their body organs outside the country? How would you describe those who recruit children and prevent them from going to schools, and instead train them on shooting and killing? How would you describe those who spread perverted fatwas such as “Sexual Jihad” and “Incest Jihad”?

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are the ones who were targeted by poisonous gases in Khan Al-Assal, near Aleppo. We have asked for an Investigation Mission, and demanded to include in its mandate the ability to determine who used chemical weapons, however, the United States and its allies, France and United Kingdom, are the ones who prevented that, and insisted, then, to limit the functions of the Mission to only decide whether chemical weapons were used or not.

We, in Syria, waited five months for the Mission to come, and when it arrived in Syria, it was withdrawn before the completion of its work, as certain states began beating the drums of war on Syria. My country has accepted the initiative graciously launched by H.E. President Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation. Syria, by acceding to the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, proves its commitment against the use of such weapons, while at the same time calls on the international community to shoulder its responsibility against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Syria is known for fulfilling its obligations and commitments; therefore, I assure you the Syria's commitment to the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, and to cooperate with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as a state party to the Convention. However, there remains the challenge that is facing all of us whether those who are supplying terrorists with these types of weapon will abide by their legal commitments, since terrorists, who used poisonous gases in my country have received chemical agents from regional and Western countries that are well known to all of us.

Mr. President,

The cessation of aggressive policies against Syria is the first step on the road towards the solution in my country. Any political solution in light of the continued support of terrorism, whether through supplying arms, funding or training, is mere illusion and misleading.

Syria has repeatedly announced that she embraces a political solution of its crisis; it is now for those who claim to support a political solution in Syria to stop all hostile practices and policies against Syria, and to head to Geneva without preconditions. On the basis of the peoples' right to self-determination the Syrian people has the exclusive authority to choose its leadership, its representatives, and decide its future and the political system that accommodates all walks of the Syrian society, including those who were deceived and pushed to take a wrong path. We, in Syria, do not bet on any party but the Syrian people who is determined, with all its components, to reject all forms of foreign interference in its domestic affairs, and to defeat the advocates of sectarianism, extremism and terrorism. In my country, Syria, there is a solid connection between state policies and the aspirations of the people. Ballot boxes for free and fair elections remain the only solution to decide on the options of the Syrian people in determining their own future away from the pressures of terrorism and foreign dictations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there remain those who do not want a political solution and always resort to aggression, either directly or through their agents on the ground. Syria has committed itself to a political solution, but our commitment to a political solution does not mean allowing terrorism to hit innocent civilians; it does not mean watching our mosques and churches destroyed, as is happening in Homs and Aleppo, and is happening now in the

town of Maloula the only place in the world whose people still speak the language of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him. What is happening to the churches and mosques is affecting, as well, all the historical heritage of Syria and humanity. Do the representatives of the Member States in this august Assembly know that terrorists from more than 83 countries are engaged in the killing of our people and our army under the appeal of global Takfiri jihad? On the other hand, are some of the Member States entitled to demand the Syrian state to ignore its constitutional responsibilities to protect its citizens and to preserve the country's unity, sovereignty and independence?

The war on terror is not only Syria's war. One day, those terrorists will return to their respective countries, and then no country in the world will be immune of this terrorism which recognizes no borders nor geography.

Mr. President,

Events in Syria have resulted in growing humanitarian needs in several key sectors. The immoral and inhuman unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union led to worsening of the living conditions of Syrian citizens, at a time my Government is working, in collaboration with the United Nations and international organizations within the framework of the Response Plan, to meet the basic needs of citizens, particularly those who were forced to leave their homes. It should be noted here that a great number of our people were forced to resort to some neighboring countries due to the activities of armed groups in border areas. Regrettably, those displaced Syrians were put, in some countries, in military training camps or in what resembles places of detention. I appeal, from this platform, to Syrian citizens to return to their towns and villages where the state guarantees their safe return and their livelihood away from the inhuman conditions they suffer in those camps. I would like to assure our readiness to exert all efforts to deliver aid from international organizations to all Syrian citizens without any discrimination wherever they are, in conformity with the General Assembly Resolution 46/182, while respecting the sovereignty and independence of Syria.

Mr. President,

Those developments in my country should not make us lose sight of Palestine and the Syrian Golan. The Syrian Arab Republic confirms its natural right to fully restore the

occupied Syrian Golan up to the line of June 4th, 1967, and emphasizes its rejection of all measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to change its natural, demographic and geographic features in a clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981). Syria reconfirms its support for the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right of return and self-determination, and to establish their independent state on their land, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President,

After Syria's accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, my country renews its call for international community to work on establishing a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In this regard, we would like to remind the international community of the Syrian initiative at the end of its non-permanent membership in the Security Council in 2003, and calls on the Security Council to adopt it. Syria stresses that establishing a free zone of from weapons of mass destruction in the region is unachievable without the accession of Israel, the only nuclear power in the region, to all treaties banning such weapons, and to put its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the same time, we emphasize on the right of all countries to acquire and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Syria condemns the continued blocking by the United States and Israel of holding the International Conference on the Establishment of a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Middle East, which was scheduled to take place in 2012.

Mr. President,

My country calls on the United States and European Union countries, and others, to refrain from adopting immoral, unilateral economic measures that contradict the rules of international law and the principles of free trade. Accordingly, we call for the lifting of the blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba for decades. We also renew our call to lift and stop all unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria and the peoples of other countries, such as Venezuela, Belarus, Iran and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea.

Mr. President,

We hope that the United Nations will lead the peoples of the world towards a better future, in order to achieve the aspirations of those peoples in prosperity, development and food self-sufficiency away from all forms of tension, confrontation and wars; for the full implementations of the principles and purposes of United Nations' Charter that upholds the sovereignty and the equality of rights and duties of all Member States. In this regard, my country looks positively at the efforts exerted by the United States and Iran to bridge the gap of mistrust between the two countries, and it hopes that this will be reflected constructively on the stability of international relations.

Thank you Mr. President.